

Organisation name	Sprachcaffe Languages Plus, Brighton
Inspection date	13 June 2019
Current accreditation status	Accredited
Reason for spot check	Routine: newly accredited institution (junior courses) Signalled: inspect new premises (adult courses) Signalled: follow up of Points to be addressed from previous reports

Recommendation

We recommend, in view of the unsatisfactory findings, that accreditation be placed under review. The period of review to be ended by submission of an action plan within three months demonstrating that the weaknesses in publicity and teaching have been addressed, followed by a full inspection within 12 months at a time when junior courses are running.

Changes to the summary statement

The summary statement should be withdrawn.

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	1997
Last full inspection	November 2017 (adults), March 2018 (juniors)
Subsequent spot check(s) (if applicable)	October 2018 (adults) June 2019 (this spot check)
Subsequent supplementary check(s) (if applicable)	July 2018 (juniors)
Subsequent interim visit(s) (if applicable)	N/a
Other related non-accredited activities (in brief) at this centre	N/a
Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates	Sprachcaffe Edwards Language School, London
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	Junior residential programmes in other centres, including Brighton and Watford

Student and staff profile	At inspection	In peak week: July
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	35	165
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	12	12
Typical age range	12–28	12–25
Typical length of stay	2–12 weeks	2 weeks
Predominant nationalities	German	German
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	4	12
Total number of managers including academic	3	3
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	3	3

Premises profile

Address of main site	24 Holland Road, Brighton BN3 1JJ
Additional sites in use	N/a
Additional sites not in use	Ralli Hall, Hove BN3 3TH
Sites inspected	24 Holland Road, Brighton BN3 1JJ

Introduction

Background

Sprachcaffe Languages Plus Brighton (SLPB) forms part of Sprachcaffe International, a global organisation based in Frankfurt with a main booking office in Malta. The organisation offers language courses and adventure holidays.

Until July 2017, the organisation's Queens Road, Brighton school was accredited together with Sprachcaffe summer and junior centres in Brighton and accepted students aged 16 and 17. From the beginning of September 2017, Queens Road no longer accepted under 18s and from November 2017 received separate accreditation for its adult provision.

Junior courses in Holland Road, Brighton became accredited following an inspection conducted in March and July 2018. It was recommended that evidence be submitted within six months to demonstrate that weaknesses in publicity and W2 had been addressed.

In October 2018 SLPB stopped using the Queens Road premises and moved its adult courses to the Holland Road site. In 2019 the organisation requested a merger of its two separate accreditations for adults and juniors. The merger was agreed to on the understanding that there would be no confusion with unaccredited multicentres. The letter to the organisation referred to a publicity issue that was subsequently addressed.

The company also owns a hotel in Brighton which houses the UK central management team. The year-round school director of studies (DoS) in Brighton and the UK general manager (GM) also have responsibilities for Sprachcaffe's unaccredited summer courses run on different sites in the UK.

SLPB were informed that this spot check would replace the scheduled one of the adult school for new premises and the routine spot check of the newly accredited junior programmes. The organisation was also told that the inspector would expect to see an action plan referring to all points to be addressed from recent inspections (adults and juniors).

Preparation

The inspector was sent copies of recent reports and related correspondence. Publicity was checked. The inspector contacted the school by telephone before the visit, but the exact date of the spot check was not made known to the school.

Programme and persons present

On the day of the spot check, one general English adult and three junior classes were running. The inspection lasted from 09.00 until 17.00. The inspector held meetings with the acting DoS, the assistant DoS (ADoS) and the accommodation and welfare officer. Group meetings were held with the teachers and students. The inspector observed all the teachers teaching on the day of the inspection and examined relevant documentation. The GM and the school administrator were not in the school on the day of the visit.

Findings

Management

The DoS, who acts as the school manager, is currently on maternity leave. She has been replaced since December 2018 by the acting DoS, who had been the ADoS in the adult school. There has also been an ADoS in place since May 2019. The acting DoS also has responsibilities for a non-accredited course that was due to be run in Watford during the summer. The school had submitted an action plan for the points to be addressed from the previous inspections of the adult school (M7), although not all points to be addressed were on it. Appraisals have been conducted with managers (M12). The acting DoS had not been able to carry out planned staff development sessions during the Easter programme due to illness and her having to teach during that period (M13). These sessions were re-scheduled for later in the summer. See the comments below regarding publicity.

Premises and facilities

Findings are reported in the area below.

Teaching and learning

At the time of the inspection, there was only one general English adult class running. The students in this class covered a wide level range, making it impossible for the teacher to meet the needs of all of the students. Several students in the group meeting stated that the level of the class was too easy for them (T6).

Findings are also reported in the Action taken on points to be addressed and the area below.

Welfare and student services

Findings are reported in the Action taken on points to be addressed.

Safeguarding under 18s

Appropriate measures are in place to enable adults and under 18s to have lessons and relax in different parts of the shared building. The inspector was shown a risk assessment identifying the main risks of accommodating adults

and juniors in the same building, which also indicated control measures. The school teaches the juniors on the lower floors and the adults on the top floor. Lesson breaks and lunches are at different times for adult and junior students. There are separate lounges and toilets for the adults and under 18s. The inspector was informed during the spot check visit that the school intends to move adult courses to the annexe of a community centre during July 2019, so that only juniors are based in the Holland Road premises at the busiest time of the year.

Publicity	Need for improvement
M22 All publicity and information is accurate, and gives rise to realistic expectations about the premises, location, and the extent and availability of the services and resources.	Not met
M23 All publicity and information about the provider and the services it offers is in clear, accurate and accessible English.	Not met
M24 Publicity gives clear, accurate and easy-to-find information on the courses.	Not met
M25 Publicity includes clear, accurate and easy-to-find information on costs.	Met
M26 Publicity or other information made available before enrolment gives an accurate description of the level of care and support given to any students under 18.	Met
M27 Publicity gives an accurate description of any accommodation offered.	Met
M28 Descriptions of staff qualifications are accurate.	Not met
M29 Claims to accreditation are in line with Scheme requirements.	Met

Comments

Publicity includes two websites, global adult and junior (U20) brochures with sections on the Brighton school, both downloadable from the website, and social media platforms.

M22 There are a number of exaggerated claims in publicity; for example, claims that teachers create 'unique lesson structures to meet the needs of individual students' are unfounded. Under a Holland Road section of the website, reference is made to campus facilities that are not available to Holland Road students. The websites have not been amended to make clear that campus courses were not running in 2019 or that adult courses were moving to another site during the summer. In three places on websites, teachers are described as native speakers, which is not always the case. Brighton is described as 'relatively safe', and one of the websites includes the unsubstantiated claim that: 'Brighton will keep you captivated and motivated to make progress in English'. One website states: 'Our school in Brighton offers a range of courses to suit all English levels and meet all language goals'. At the time of the spot check, only one general English adult course was running and the proficiency level of students varied greatly.

M23 Much of the language is appropriate. However, some of the expressions referring to Brighton and its attractions would be inaccessible to lower-level speakers.

M24 One part of publicity refers to a maximum class size, but then states that this might be exceeded 'exceptionally'. One of the websites states: 'We reserve the right to increase class sizes in exceptional circumstances but aim at a maximum of 15 students per class'. The junior brochure gives an average class size, not a maximum one. One part of the website refers to junior courses in Brighton being for 14 to 21 year-olds, not 12 to 17 year-olds. The non-teaching days are displayed in brochures. However, *Terms and Conditions* on one of the websites refer to days in 2014.

M25 There is an example of the price of one excursion on the website, but a range of prices is not provided.

M26 Publicity does not make clear the level of supervision of under 18s. The safeguarding policy on one of the websites is too detailed and does not make clear the level of supervision. However, appropriate reference is made to this in the parental consent form.

M27 There is information about accommodation options on the websites and in the U20 brochure. The adult brochure claims that the residence, as well as other forms of accommodation, will make students feel 'completely at home'.

M28 The website states that teachers are 'experienced', which is not the case for all teachers at all times of the year.

Premises and facilities	Met
P1 Premises, including any external areas, are in a good state of repair, cleanliness and decoration, and provide a comfortable environment for students and staff.	Strength
P2 Classrooms and other learning areas provide a suitable study environment.	Met
P3 Students have adequate room and suitable facilities for relaxation and the consumption of food.	Met
P4 Free drinking water is available. A choice of appropriate food at affordable prices is available to students on site, if not available locally.	Met
P5 There is adequate signage to buildings, routes, rooms and exits, and there are facilities for the display of general information.	Met

P6 There is sufficient space for all staff, for meetings, relaxation and the storage of personal possessions, and for teachers to carry out their preparation and marking.	Met
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Comments

P1 The premises were refurbished in the early part of 2018 and are in a very good state of repair and decoration. There are a number of garden tables and benches in the back gardens.

Teaching: classroom observation	Met
T23 Teachers demonstrate sound knowledge and awareness of the use of English and the linguistic systems underlying it, and provide appropriate models of both spoken and written English.	Met
T24 The content of the lessons shows that the course objectives, the learning needs and cultural backgrounds of the students have been taken into account.	Not met
T25 Lessons lead to relevant learning outcomes, made known to students and achieved through a coherent sequence of activities.	Not met
T26 Teaching techniques are appropriate to the focus of the lesson and to the needs of the group and individual learners.	Met
T27 Teachers promote learning by the effective management of the classroom environment and resources.	Met
T28 Students receive appropriate and timely feedback on their performance during the lesson.	Met
T29 Lessons include activities to evaluate whether learning is taking place.	Met
T30 Teachers demonstrate the ability to engage students and create a positive learning atmosphere.	Met

Comments

T23 Teachers generally showed a good knowledge of the linguistic systems of English, although very little use was made of the phonemic script or stress marks to help students learn new lexis.
T24 The learning needs of students had been taken into account in some lessons, but in others the lesson topic did not seem relevant to the learners, and in one class the range of levels of the students was too large to enable the learning needs of all students to be met.
T25 Lesson aims were not expressed as learning outcomes in most of the lessons observed.
T26 Most teachers used a good range of techniques, including effective elicitation and nomination.
T27 Teachers generally gave clear instructions, although in one class some of the students were unclear what they had to do. Whiteboards were generally used satisfactorily, and in some cases well.
T28 Some teachers monitored students' language during activities and corrected appropriately. However, opportunities for error correction were missed in some lessons.
T29 Most lessons included examples of teachers checking students' learning through short assessment activities.
T30 Students were engaged in most lessons. Students worked productively in pairs and in groups in most lessons observed.

Classroom observation summary

All of the teaching observed was of a satisfactory standard. Lessons had been planned to meet the needs of students in some but not all classes observed. Teachers used a good range of techniques, but in some classes, insufficient attention was paid to error correction. Students were engaged in most lessons. The teaching observed met the requirements of the Scheme.

Action taken on points to be addressed

These points to be addressed combine those from the last full inspection of the junior school (J) in March and July 2018 and the spot check inspection of the adult school (A) in October 2018.

Management

M2 (J) Longer term objectives, and the specific steps and time frame needed to achieve them, were only identified in general terms.

Addressed. There is an organisational plan for the school.

M8 (A) A new appraisal system is in place but not all staff have gone through the process.

Addressed. Managers have received appraisals from the GM.

M22 (J) The SU20 website includes a number of inflated claims, for example, 'your learning experience will be fun-filled and informative, while your time in Brighton will leave you amazed and inspired by one of UK's true gems.'

M22 (A) On the website teachers are described as 'native English teachers' which is not always the case. At the time of the inspection there was no mention of the planned change of location 11 days later.

Not yet addressed. The quotation above from the junior school report (M22), remains almost the same on the website and there are other inflated claims made about courses in publicity, such as 'truly life-changing and unforgettable'. The website includes the unsubstantiated claim that: 'Brighton will keep you captivated and motivated to make progress in English'. Sprachcaffe teachers are still described in three places on the website as native speakers, when not all of them are.

M23 (J) The SU20 website contains several examples of inaccessible language, for example, 'an awesome vibe'

Not yet addressed. The word 'vibe' still features in publicity, along with other expressions and sentences that are too complicated to be understood by lower-level speakers, particularly in relation to descriptions of Brighton.

M24 (J) There is no clear statement of course objectives or indication of what study at each level involves.

Not yet addressed. There is no clear statement of courses objectives or indication of what study at each level involves.

M24 (A) Courses are described on the Brighton pages as a number of 45-minute lessons rather than total hours.

Addressed. The total number of hours of lessons is given.

M25 (A) Costs relating to additional excursions organised by a specialist tour company are not indicated.

Partially addressed. There is now an example of the price of one excursion on the website, but a range of prices is not provided.

M27 (J) There is only a limited description of the accommodation provided. There is no clear description of the services provided.

Addressed. This has now been added to the websites.

Premises and resources

P3 (J) The student lounge and the staircases became crowded in the lunch-time break and when students were gathering for activities.

Addressed. Breaks and lunches are staggered for adults and juniors. There are plans to stagger classes during the busy summer period.

Teaching and learning

T18 (J) The portfolios seen by the inspectors were only partially completed and there was no reference made to them in the observed lessons.

Not yet addressed. Portfolios had been completed in one class, partly in another, and not at all in a third class.

T23 (J) In several segments teachers were not confident with phonological systems.

Not yet addressed. Teachers did not refer to phonological systems in the lessons observed.

T24 (J) There was little evidence of teachers working on the specific language needs of the students.

Not yet addressed. The language needs of particular students were not being addressed in some of the lessons observed.

T26 (A) Most interactions passed through the teacher and there were missed opportunities for more student interaction.

Addressed. Students worked in groups and pairs in all lessons observed.

T27 (J) There were few varieties of interaction. Useful board techniques to support learning such as indicating stress were not evident in most of the observed segments.

Partially addressed. Different interaction patterns were used. However, useful board techniques such as indicating stress were not observed.

T27 (A) Classroom arrangements were mainly static. In some lessons boardwork was weak with poor zoning of information.

Addressed. Boardwork was generally satisfactory, although teacher training in this area had not been conducted.

T28 (J) Generally error correction was not seen as an integral part of the lessons.

T28 (A) The range of correction techniques was limited.

Not addressed. Not all teachers used appropriate correction techniques during the lessons observed.

Welfare and student services

W2 (J) More work is needed to clarify further the roles of specific postholders at both central and centre level.

Addressed. Roles and responsibilities are understood by post holders.

W9 (A) The entrance to the building and the apartment are in need of decoration.

N/a. Building no longer used by the school.

W11 (A) One of the homestays where a student was accommodated did not have an up-to-date Gas Safe certificate.

Addressed. There are good procedures in place to check that homestays have Gas Safe certificates.

W12 The accommodation information sent to students does not always include the approximate time of travel between the accommodation and the school.

Addressed. Accommodation information includes the approximate time of travel from accommodation to the school.

Conclusions

The school has taken appropriate measures to ensure that adults and under 18s can be accommodated in the same teaching premises. The premises have benefited from refurbishments carried out in 2018. A number of the points to be addressed in *Management* and *Welfare and student services* have been satisfactorily resolved.

However, there are still a large number of issues in *Publicity* that need to be addressed, including additional ones. In order to address them all, this would require changes to be made to comments about all Sprachcaffe courses and staff, as well as to Brighton-specific ones.

The professional development planned for teachers in Easter did not take place. Some of the teaching observed raised similar issues to those mentioned in previous reports. In the general English adult class observed, the level range was too large for the needs of learners to be met.
